

O U R T A B L E.

CIRCULAR, CONTAINING INSTRUCTIONS TO THE SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS IN CANADA EAST, AND A PRECIS OF THEIR DUTIES.

ONE of the most important measures which, since the Union of the Provinces, has emanated from the Legislature, is the Education Act, by which liberal provision is made for the education of the youth of Canada. The amount set apart for this most worthy object is fifty thousand pounds, to be annually distributed to the Common Schools throughout the Province—thirty thousand being allotted to Eastern, and twenty thousand to Western Canada. There has been some difficulty experienced, however, in inducing the inhabitants to comply with the conditions necessary to entitle them to the benefits which the law contemplates, partly from the obscurity of some of the provisions of the Act, and partly from the lukewarm interest taken by the community in its successful operation.

The Government was happily fortunate in its choice of Officers. The Rev. Robert Murray, in Western Canada, has won golden opinions by his unwearied exertions to induce a general compliance with the spirit of the law; and in our own section of the Province, in which Dr. Meilleur is Superintendent, we have had frequent opportunities of witnessing the zeal and energy which have characterised the management of Educational affairs. From the period of his appointment until the present time, he has never faltered in his endeavours to make the people comprehend the value of the measure, and to instruct them in the easiest and simplest mode of rendering it conducive to their own welfare, and that of their posterity. The success that has so far crowned his efforts, notwithstanding the obstacles which have never ceased to impede his progress, must be his own exceeding great reward. If his labours be heavy, his consciousness of the grandeur of their object must enable him to bear them, not only without repining, but with pleasure to himself—a conclusion to which we are led by our knowledge of the deep interest taken by him in public and private education, many years before his appointment to the responsible and honorable office he now so worthily fills.

We have been led to make these remarks by a pamphlet, containing "Instructions to the School Commissioners in Canada East, and a Précis of their duties," which has been some days upon Our Table. It is a lucid and concise exposition of the requirements of the Act, accompanied by remarks and suggestions from the Superinten-

dant himself, which do equal honour to his head and heart—breathing, as they do, a spirit of enlightened benevolence, and an anxiety for the welfare of the rising generation, which cannot fail to be responded to by all to whom the Circular is addressed, or who have an opportunity of perusing it.

There is, among the many excellent suggestions which the pamphlet contains, one in particular the importance of which is strikingly apparent. It has reference to the establishment of Superior or Model Schools, in which the higher branches of a strictly practical education should be taught. The paragraph we shall take the liberty of extracting:

"It would be very desirable to have in each Parish or Township, a Model or Superior School, where children attending the Common Schools, particularly those who show a better disposition, might complete a course of practical study. I cannot doubt that the Commissioners will fully coincide with me in the view I have taken of the paramount importance of establishing Schools of this description, for the support of which the friends of education in each locality, will doubtless make it a duty to contribute as liberally as possible; for if it be desirable that all children should have a certain degree of education, it must be equally, or more advantageous, to afford to a due proportion, a practical acquaintance with the higher branches of knowledge, in order to fit them in time to become Teachers themselves, or otherwise to perform their parts well in the after business of life."

After enumerating the qualifications which should be possessed by the Teachers of these Superior Schools, the Superintendent proceeds:

"The Commissioners, in whom is vested the power of selecting Teachers, will therefore, I confidently trust, exercise the greatest care in choosing the parties to whom they entitle the *whisks* of the generation rising around them—their own children, and the children of their friends and neighbours—who will, on their part, remember with gratitude, that to them, under Providence, they owe it, that their younger years have not been spent in vain."

Could anything from us add to the weight of the Superintendent's recommendation, we would most earnestly impress upon the attention of the School Commissioners this important hint. The Common Schools, with the meagre remuneration which, at best, the teachers will receive, cannot be expected to afford anything beyond the elementary branches of education, which will but poorly satisfy children of more than the average aptitude for the acquisition of knowledge. One Superior School to each of the Parishes or Townships, to which the better disposed class might resort, would be productive of the most beneficial results; and, besides the good it would directly accomplish, would be the means of causing emulation, and a desire to excel, among the children attending the Common Schools, in order to qualify